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# Partial demolition of Asa Wood School proposed

By Brent Shrum  
*Kootenai Valley Record*  
Libby school officials are considering partial demolition of Asa Wood School to deal with the presence of asbestos-contaminated vermiculite insulation in the walls.

During a special meeting last week with local Environmental Protection Agency representatives, the school board outlined a plan to tear down the western portion of the building while leaving the gym and the front section facing Idaho Avenue standing. The western wing, located behind the gym, was an addition to the original building and contains vermiculite within its cinder block perimeter walls, board members noted.

"I don't think there's any easy way to remove that, so we would likely look at taking down those walls," said local EPA team

leader Victor Kerellapper.

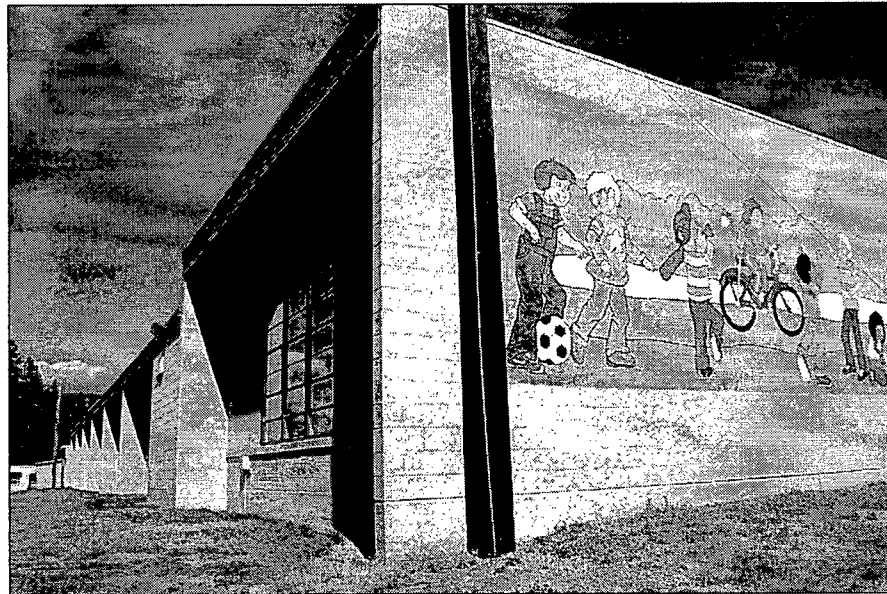
Board chair Tracy Comeau asked Kerellapper if the EPA would tear down the entire wing, or just remove the outer walls while leaving the interior walls standing.

"Those are the ones that it looks like we wouldn't remove, but we would also look at the cost of doing that," Kerellapper said.

School superintendent Kirby Maki said the district is looking for an estimate on how much of the demolition cost the EPA would cover.

"Unless we really know, it's going to be hard for the board to make a decision on that, because we don't have a lot of money left," Maki said.

"I think we need you to put together a demolition plan with several different scenarios so



See Demolition on Page 8 Libby School District officials are considering tearing down the western wing of Asa Wood School.

September 20, 2011

## Demolition

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we can make a decision," board member Ellen Johnston told Kerellapper.

Kerellapper acknowledged that it might be less expensive to demolish the entire wing than to attempt a "surgical extraction."

Kerellapper said he would make the issue a priority and start planning for action next spring.

The Asa Wood building

was closed as a school at the end of the 2010-2011 academic year, with elementary classes moving to the former middle school this fall.

Maki said the district is planning to retain the property for its outdoor play areas, its heavily used gym, and its potential to provide rooms for community use.

"People depend on that for a place to go," he said.

# Bark piles show 'very, very low levels' of asbestos

By Brent Shrum  
*Kootenai Valley Record*  
New tests of wood chips and bark piled at the former Stimson mill show extremely low levels of asbestos contamination, according to Environmental Protection Agency officials.

Preliminary tests of the wood waste, formerly sold as landscaping material, detected the presence of asbestos in four of 20 samples, but those tests did not indicate a percentage. More detailed tests were undertaken this summer to quantify the amount of asbestos in the wood.

"They call came out at very, very low levels,"



Tests of wood chips and bark at the former Stimson mill show low levels of asbestos contamination.

local EPA team leader Victor Kerellapper told the Lincoln County commissioners last week. "The ones that did have detects, they were in the .001 percent range."

The first tests were conducted in 2008 after a study of bark from trees near the defunct W.R. Grace vermiculite mine showed the presence of asbestos fibers. Subsequent activity-based sampling tests were undertaken, in which workers donned protective gear and simulated the use of the material in practical scenarios. Those samples came back negative, showing that the workers

had not been exposed to asbestos.

The issue of asbestos in the bark piles made national headlines this summer, prompting additional testing. New activity-based sampling was undertaken, with workers shoveling and raking the material. The results of those tests are not yet available.

Because of criticisms over the use of water to dampen the piles before the previous sampling, efforts were made to ensure the piles in the recent round of tests were dry, said EPA project

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## Bark

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manager Mike Cirian.

"This time we went to extremes the other way," Cirian said.

Based on the previous negative results from activity-based sampling, Cirian said the bark piles are "not an imminent concern," although to be

on the safe side the EPA would probably remove the material if it had been used in a children's play area.

Sales of the material were voluntarily stopped by the Lincoln County Port Authority last spring following discussion of the initial sampling results.

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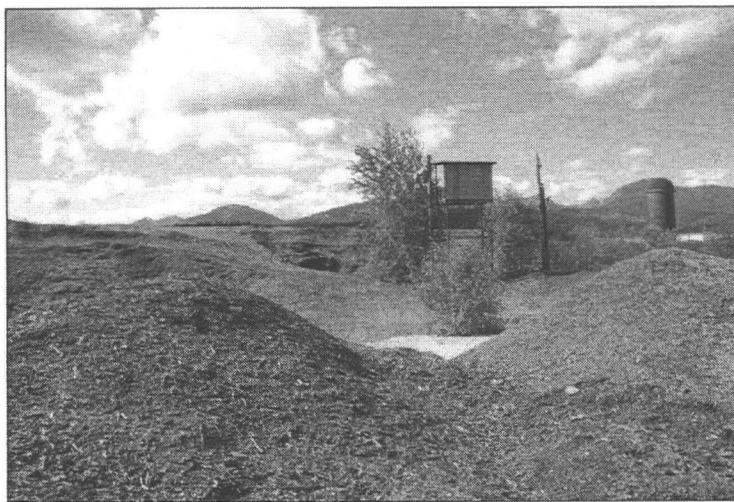
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